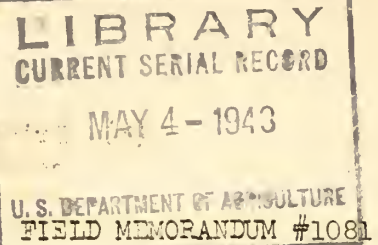


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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D. C.



Re: Priority for Urgent
Telephone Toll Calls

TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS:

December 5, 1942

We have just received a memorandum, dated November 10, from the Assistant Secretary, transmitting a copy of Order No. 20, recently issued by the Board of War Communications, providing that certain telephone toll calls relating to the war effort and the public safety be given preferred handling. Quoted below are the pertinent parts of the Order:

"1. Priorities

On and after November 1, 1942, urgent toll calls placed with commercial telephone systems by the authorized persons or agencies designated in Paragraph 2 shall upon request be given priority over all other toll calls in accordance with the provisions of, and in the order set forth in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) below:

(a) Priority 1 shall be given to calls which require immediate completion for war purposes or to safeguard life or property and which relate to one or more of the following matters:

- (1) Arrangements for moving armed forces during combat operations.
- (2) Extremely urgent orders to armed forces.
- (3) Immediate dangers due to the presence of the enemy.
- (4) Hurricane, flood, earthquake or other disaster materially affecting the war effort or public security.

Where necessary for the immediate completion of a call having Priority 1, any conversation in process (other than one having Priority 1) may be interrupted.

- (b) Priority 2 shall be given to calls which require immediate completion for the national defense and security, the successful conduct of the war, or to safeguard life or property other than those specifically described in Paragraph 1 (a).
- (c) Priority 3 shall be given to calls which require prompt completion for the national defense and security, the successful conduct of the war, or to safeguard life or property and which involve matters of the following type:
 - (1) Important governmental functions.
 - (2) Machinery, tools or raw materials for war plants.
 - (3) Production of essential supplies.
 - (4) Maintenance of essential public services.
 - (5) Supply or movement of food.
 - (6) Civilian defense or public health and safety.

2. Preferred Callers

The following persons and agencies are designated as authorized persons or agencies entitled to use telephone toll priorities where such call is required in the manner and for a purpose specified above.

The President of the United States, the Vice President, Cabinet officers, Members of Congress, Army, Navy, Aircraft Warning Service, Federal, State and Municipal Government Departments and Agencies, Embassies, Legations, and Commissions of the United Nations, Civilian Defense Organizations, Red Cross, State and Home Guards, essential war industries, essential services such as communications, transportation, power, water, fuel, press associations, newspapers, and health and sanitation services."

The Order further provides that telephone facilities of any subscriber who wilfully obtains or attempts to obtain priority for a toll call by fraudulently designating such call as a priority call or by furnishing false information to any telephone carriers for the purpose of obtaining a priority, shall be subject to closure, removal or other appropriate governmental action.

In accordance with the provisions of the Order, calls emanating from the Department of Agriculture entitled to the use of telephone toll priorities will, in most instances, be of the Priority-2 or 3 class. Calls eligible for Priority-2 or 3 treatment should be placed in the normal manner, and in case delay is encountered, you should notify the operator, stating "Priority-2 or 3," as the

case may be. If you have calls which are eligible under the Order to Priority-1 treatment-those involving the most extreme emergencies-it is suggested that the operator be notified by saying, "Priority-1," immediately upon placing the call.

It is believed that the Soil Conservation Service will have few calls entitled to priority treatment. It is requested, however, that such calls entitled to priority treatment be handled in accordance with the above instructions.

The delays frequently encountered in completing long distance calls in the usual manner have been caused, in most cases, due to the lack of sufficient circuit facilities brought about by the rapid increase in the number of long distance calls throughout the country. Every effort should be made to reduce the number and duration of long distance calls to a minimum and to utilize the mails and the telegraph facilities whenever practicable.

It will help, further, if such long distance calls which are necessary, be placed during off-peak periods, that is, between 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m., between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and between 9:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

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